



Downtown Livability

Update of the Downtown Livability Initiative

The Council-appointed Downtown Livability CAC concluded its work on June 18, 2014. A final report on the Committee's process and recommendations is expected to come before the City Council in early 2015.

With much more detail to be included in the CAC's upcoming report, the major areas of the Committee's recommendations are summarized below. These include both code-related and non-code related recommendation by the CAC.

Background

The Downtown Livability Advisory Committee was appointed by Council in the Spring of 2013 and tasked with examining the Downtown Land Use Code for potential revisions. The Committee met monthly between May 2013, and June 2014. Significant time was invested by the Committee in soliciting public input and understanding what is working, not working, and where there is room for improvement relative to the Land Use Code.

The Committee's work was based on a set of guiding principles from Council centered on what has changed since the original Downtown Land Use Code was adopted in 1981. The Committee's work sought to further the livability of Downtown; an excerpt from Downtown Bellevue Subarea Plan defines livability as follows:

Livability is about quality; about weaving an urban fabric rich in resources and quality of life. Livable cities provide welcoming places to eat and sources of entertainment. Livable cities develop parks and open space. Truly great cities are also memorable. Memorable cities impart an unforgettable experience from having visited there. Memorable cities have strong, clear identities.

Other words have also been used to describe the qualities of livable places, such as:

- Walkable
- Safe
- Healthy
- Open spaces
- Recreation
- Things to do
- Good for families
- Great neighborhoods
- Accessible for all
- Arts and culture
- Aesthetically beautiful
- Great architecture
- Vibrant
- Memorable
- Attracts new residents & visitors
- Affordable
- Transportation options
- Green
- Third places
- Sustainable
- Caring community
- Economically vibrant
- Live-work-play
- Resilient

Livability has been integral to the process through:

- ❖ The foundation provided by Council with the Project Principles and defined Scope of Project
- ❖ Learning from what's been built/experience on the ground through the Land Use Code Audit
- ❖ Developing options to address what can be improved/new opportunities, within the project scope

Summary of CAC Recommendations

Major Pedestrian Corridor (March 2014)	Relationship to Livability
<u>Code-Related</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extend the Pedestrian Corridor to the east to be more integrated with the Civic Center District and the future light rail station• Better activation through "major" and "minor" points of interest and programming• Increase weather protection along the Corridor• Landscape concept that considers Corridor as a whole and individual segments• Integration of bicycles and other wheeled users <u>Other Recommendations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue public investment in key sections (e.g. bottleneck west of 108th)• Improved wayfinding, lighting, crosswalks, etc.• Partnership to support additional programmed events• Explore lidding I-405 with park/open space connection to Wilburton• Explore "grand" design for the Corridor• Explore changing the name/rebrand the Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ <i>Creating a must-see Downtown attraction</i>❖ <i>Adding character and memorability to Downtown</i>❖ <i>Creating a more green Pedestrian Corridor</i>❖ <i>Creating a more walkable, safe, and comfortable Downtown</i>❖ <i>Encouraging multi-modal travel</i>❖ <i>Opportunities for more programmed events in Downtown</i>❖ <i>Responding to emerging changes, including the NE 6th Street light rail station</i>

Public Open Spaces (March 2014)	Relationship to Livability
<p><u>Code-Related</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space Expression – Identify and incentivize open space for each Downtown neighborhood, to help address each neighborhood’s needs and character. • I-405 Open Space/Connection – Explore potential for significant open space/park lid over I 405 from Downtown to Wilburton. • Through-Block Connections – Strengthen requirements and guidelines for integrating pathways through superblocks. <p><u>Other Recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Mechanism – Explore method for helping to fund Downtown open space acquisition and improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Provides recreation, and open space for all</i> ❖ <i>Increased “greening” of Downtown</i> ❖ <i>Presents opportunities for social interaction, places for families, and a healthy community</i> ❖ <i>Promotes a walkable and safe healthy community</i> ❖ <i>Will reinforce neighborhood identity</i>

Amenity Incentive System (April 2014)	Relationship to Livability
<p><u>Code-Related</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction on list of current and new amenities that should be considered for updated system (see below) • Weather protection moved to development requirement • Additional review and analysis needed on bonuses for parking, residential • Additional evaluation of affordable housing regarding nature of bonus – relationship to what market is delivering and multifamily tax exemption program being considered by Council • Potential for neighborhood-specific weighting to occur at future stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Opportunities for amenities to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity</i> ❖ <i>Potential to focus bonuses on the most important amenities</i> ❖ <i>Addition of new amenities that focus on livability and the future of Downtown</i> ❖ <i>Opportunities to encourage creative design</i> ❖ <i>Potential for added “lift” to incentive system through additional height and FAR</i>
List of Potential Amenities (April 2014)	
<p>“Existing List” means from the current list of 23 bonusable amenities in the Land Use Code. “New Idea” means a potential new amenity to be bonusd through the incentive system.</p> <div> <div> <p><u>Public Gathering Space/Placemaking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Major Pedestrian Corridor - Existing List ▪ Pedestrian Oriented Frontage - Existing List ▪ Signature Streets - New Idea ▪ Third Places, gathering places - New Idea ▪ Farmers Market Space - New Idea <p><u>Neighborhood-Serving Uses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Meeting Rooms - Existing List ▪ Child Care Services - Existing List ▪ Retail Food - Existing List ▪ Space for Non-profit Social Services - Existing List <p><u>Parks/Green/Open Space</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outdoor Plaza - Existing List ▪ Landscape Feature - Existing List ▪ Landscape Area - Existing List ▪ Donation of Park Property - Existing List ▪ Residential Entry Courtyard - Existing List ▪ Active Recreation Area - Existing List ▪ Enclosed Plaza - Existing List ▪ Upper Level Plaza - New Idea ▪ Green Space/Open Space - New Idea ▪ Pocket Parks & Urban Courtyards - New Idea ▪ Green Streets Concepts - New Idea ▪ Landmark Tree Preservation - New Idea ▪ Significant Tree Planting - New Idea ▪ Activated Rooftops - New Idea </div> <div> <p><u>Parking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Underground Parking - Existing List ▪ Above Grade Parking - Existing List ▪ Above Grade Parking in Residential Bldg - Existing List <p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residential Uses - Existing List ▪ Affordable Housing - New Idea <p><u>Arts and Culture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performing Arts Space - Existing List ▪ Art Space - New Idea ▪ Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources - New Idea ▪ Sculpture - Existing List ▪ Water Feature - Existing List <p><u>Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Iconic Features (i.e. rooftop, tower, etc.) - New Idea ▪ Increased Setbacks for Light/Air - New Idea ▪ Small Lot Interesting Architecture - New Idea ▪ Sustainable Features/Practices - New Idea ▪ Freestanding Canopies at Corners - New Idea ▪ Pedestrian Bridges - New Idea </div> </div>	

Design Guidelines (May 2014)

Relationship to Livability

Re-work the Design Guidelines that are the basis for development review, as follows

- Format: Consolidate and reformat for improved clarity and readability and include intent statements, guideline detail, graphics with text of recommended/not recommend treatment
- Content:
 - Building Frontages/Sidewalk Relationships – Focus on quality of the pedestrian experience.
 - Pedestrian Circulation/Through-block Connections - Map existing/conceptual locations to improve connectivity.
 - Materials - Emphasize permanence and durability and urban context.
 - Façade Treatment - Building massing and articulation with emphasis on building base, human scale, visual interest.
 - Rooftop Design – Promote a more memorable skyline. Address mechanical equipment screening.
 - Public Views – Emphasize views from major public spaces, such as the Downtown Park and Pedestrian Corridor.
 - Reinforcing Neighborhood Character – Emphasize the character and distinctiveness of Downtown neighborhoods.
 - Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods – Ensure development presents an appropriate interface with adjoining neighborhoods.
 - Tower massing and separation - If additional height is permitted (in development)
 - Other Issues to Address - Environmental sustainability, safety and crime prevention, and other miscellaneous topics
- Procedures:
 - Maintain the current administrative design review process
 - Allow greater flexibility through departures
 - Consider alternative process for projects that provide exceptional benefit

- ❖ *Design Guidelines influence development to create a functional, safe, aesthetically pleasing and sustainable Downtown.*
- ❖ *More beautiful, interesting, memorable Downtown*
- ❖ *Promotes walkability, and a healthy community*
- ❖ *Strengthens neighborhood character*

Building Height and Form (June 2014)

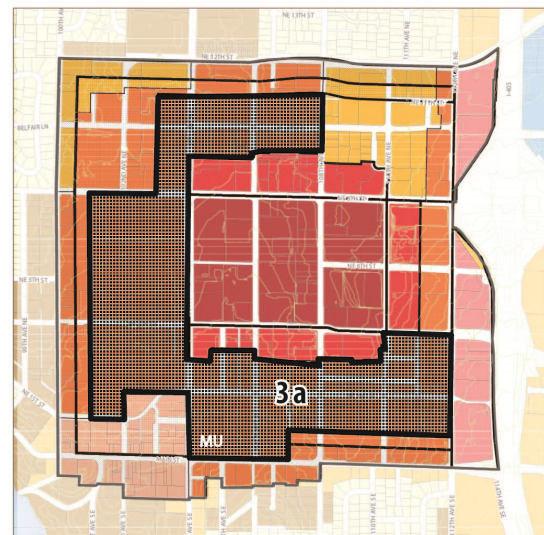
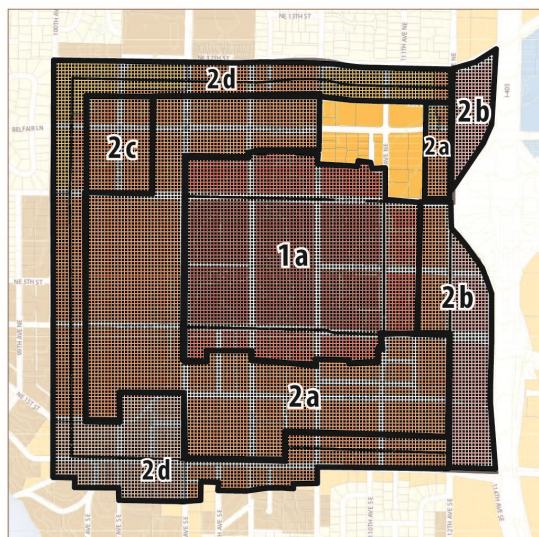
Relationship to Livability

Consider increased building height and density in exchange for provision of exceptional amenities.

- 1a (Downtown Core): Up to 600' in O1 and up to 300' in O2 to help accentuate the "wedding cake" with no FAR increase (provided residential FAR is currently unlimited in O1).
- 2a (MU District): Up to 300' for residential buildings and up to 200' for non-residential buildings in MU district.
- 2b (OLB District): Up to 350' and 6.0 FAR between NE 8th and NE 4th and up to 200' and 5.0 FAR between NE 4th and Main Street.
- 2c ("Deep B" Design District/NW Corner): Range of 160-240' for residential with an average tower height of 200' but no increase in FAR.
- 2d (Perimeter): Up to 70' for residential in "A" perimeter design district with no increase in FAR. No change to remainder of "B".
- 3a (MU District): Equalize nonresidential and residential density in MU. Increase both to 5.0 FAR taking into account floorplate needs of nonresidential buildings.

The following factors would be addressed during the Council/Planning Commission process: tower design and separation; transition issues; effect of added FAR/height at pedestrian scale and larger scale; and mitigation of any localized traffic impacts.

- ❖ Opportunity to create a more distinctive skyline
- ❖ Encourage more interesting and memorable architecture
- ❖ Opportunity for more light and air between buildings by allowing additional height
- ❖ Opportunity for more ground-level open space
- ❖ Ability to promote variability in building heights
- ❖ Ability to reinforce district identity
- ❖ Potential for additional height or FAR to add "lift" to incentive system
- ❖ Potential to add density around light rail transit investment



Downtown Parking (June 2014)	Relationship to Livability
<p>CAC direction to defer potential changes to parking ratios until a comprehensive Downtown parking study can be done.</p> <p><u>Code-related</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive parking study to include items such as on-street parking, potential for public garages, and opportunities for coordinated management of the parking supply such as valet or shared use, etc. • Revisit Code to respond to changing needs of Downtown as East Link light rail nears completion (2021-23). <p><u>Non-Code</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a potential shared public parking facility for short-term/retail/visitor use to serve the Old Bellevue area. This area has unique characteristics and associated needs that warrant a shared facility. 	<p>❖ <i>Important relationships to commuter, resident and visitor populations, provided CAC did not form recommendations on this topic.</i></p>

Land Use Elements of Station Area Planning (March-May 2014)
<p>Land use and design implications of the NE 6th Street and East Main light rail stations are integrated in Downtown Livability topic areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines - Activated areas and streetscape at entrances to NE 6th Station • Density & Uses - Updated vision for DT-OLB District • Pedestrian Corridor & Public Open Space - Extension of Pedestrian Corridor and connection across I-405

